

BY BOUTLE BROTHERS.

All business letters should be addressed to the Boston Mail and Courier, 100 State Street, Boston, Mass. For publication notices, please apply to the Editor, 100 State Street, Boston, Mass.

TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 1893.

Ingalls' Frothy View of Blaine.
In his recent article, written for a newspaper syndicate, ex-Senator John J. Ingalls, of Kansas, has sought an attractive theme in the life and character of the greatest of popular leaders in America, JAMES G. BLAINE, but beyond the display of some rhetorical skill it entirely fails to present any valuable judgment of a great career. In his opening sentences Mr. Ingalls says "it will be difficult for a historian of the future to detect the secret of Blaine's extraordinary and phenomenal influence over his contemporaries." The article affords evidence that Mr. Ingalls certainly has not discovered the secret, or learned much of the obvious and fundamental traits and influences of a life and character that have made an indelible impress upon one of the most remarkable periods of the world's history.

A writer in the Boston Journal has so graphically pointed out the superficial and erroneous nature of Mr. Ingalls' estimate of Mr. Blaine and his relation to the great progressive movements of his life and times, that we print it herewith:

James G. Blaine.

And now comes ex-Senator John J. Ingalls of Kansas, with his analysis of the life, character, and place in history of James G. Blaine. Mr. Ingalls has written an able but useless article on this subject, one which may be commended for its rhetorical merits, and for those alone.

It is still a very early day to make anything like a final summary of Mr. Blaine's position in American history, but, for those who are willing to look and to learn, there are points as clear as bright sunshine.

Mr. Blaine was not Daniel Webster; he was not Henry Clay; he was not anyone other than himself. His methods were original, while he tempered them by his historic experience for special purposes and occasions; his political views were based upon and worked out from his own study of the complex questions that crowded upon each other's heels during the years of his childhood; his campaign management looked simply to careful organization and to a thorough knowledge of the ways and means of placing before the American people the burning questions which their ballots were to decide. He had read, studied, reflected, and, where practicable, had used the wisdom of Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Everett, Evans, Douglass, of all the great political thinkers and workers of an earlier day. He had appreciated, as few of his contemporaries did, that the world would not be ruled by the political wisdom of one decade, but that the widest folly of its successor.

Two days after his death, and in a large gathering of journalists at Washington, Senator Platt, of Connecticut, said that he had never read a good analysis of Mr. Blaine and then, after a few moments' thought, added that such a work could come from the pen or brain of no one individual. There it is! One saw him in one light, and another in the opposite. This man appreciated and comprehended his matches parliamentary power, the great was spellbound by his social fascinations.

For twenty and twenty years Mr. Blaine was before the gaze of all men, placed upon a pedestal, standing upon which he might be viewed from all sides. Many of his critics have drifted aimlessly and carelessly into a slipshod method of saying that he is identified with no special part of national legislation. Save the words! From June 28, 1856, when he made his first important speech to a Maine assembly at Fitchfield, in that State, and explained the meaning and foreboding work of the infant Republican party, from then until the autumn of 1892, there is no great enactment of a national policy that he did not affect personally.

For sixteen years it was to him more than to any one else, throughout the length and breadth of the United States, that both the great political parties looked for the issues, and the methods of their discussion, that were to be presented to the people. It was Mr. Blaine who worked a thorough and complete revolution in public oratory as applied to campaign purposes. He discarded with irresistible emphasis the old-time and wearisome two and three-hour speeches that served only to confuse and burden men's minds by introducing a short and pointed setting forth of some few great issues, such as the dilapidated bridge with slavery. He could, when it was necessary, take up and elucidate a great and complicated question, and for an unprecedented span dwell upon and unravel its history, meaning, and existing bearings, and that in a fashion all his own; one that held a vice-like grip upon attention, and wherein the logic was irrefragable.

Such were, in 1878, his speeches on the great issues of our currency and national financial honor. In the autumn of that year he spoke to a multitude as large as General Grant could accommodate, while for hours he held them with marvelous power, and when he sat down Senator George F. Hoar said to his neighbor, "That was a perfect speech." Upon those great questions he spoke even as far as Western Iowa, and the crowds who came to hear him were something beyond reckoning. It was Mr. Blaine that checked, stayed and resulted that wild greenback heresy, as it was he who brought forward the tariff issues in the two campaigns that resulted in the elections of Presidents Hayes and Garfield.

Mr. Blaine never encountered any problem or situation in life wherein he was not the true greatness. On the floor of the House of Representatives his industry and debating powers stimulated associates and called them from "trivium" to industry. In the Speaker's chair he exercised a powerful and influence that will not be eclipsed. In the Senate he kept over traditions and precedents that had grown into laws more binding than those of Moses and Persians, and which had hampered the progress of business to a meretricious extent. On the floor of the Senate he made some speeches that called forth admiration, but under which they lay, as time has demonstrated, a far-seeing statesmanship.

It is necessary, in this connection, to cite only his attitude on the Chinese question and the distribution of the Alabama award, when he went to the head of President Garfield's Cabinet. He did not take many weeks to convince his fellow-countrymen that a new era had dawned in the management of our foreign relations, one, too, which meant progress and not apathy. The timid trembled a little, but the bolder drew breath of encouragement, feeling that our growing interests would not be abandoned to a foreign hand.

When Mr. Blaine was nominated for President in 1884, and took the field himself, he made a series of speeches that were unparalleled for brilliancy, accuracy, and a driving force. Some of the arguments that stamp operators wonder at the fertility of resources possessed by this marvelous man.

Neither Mr. Ingalls nor any other critic who chooses to weigh in nice scales Mr. Blaine's life and character ought either in justice to him or in fairness to themselves, to undertake to detect and obscure any visions they may seek to influence by such shallow statements as that his overwhelming popularity defies analysis, or that there is a subtle something that eludes comprehension when one sits down to reason upon the matter in calmness. The popularity was based upon the strength of all possible foundations, upon great worth, largeness of aim, unselfishness of character, purity of habit, accurate knowledge, tremendous industry, courage of conviction, in short all that enters into and becomes the exponent of human supremacy. No ordinary person could rise from the humblest surroundings of an obscure village of Western Pennsylvania to a position where his influence was felt throughout his native land, and in all the nations of the world. Mr. Blaine did this, and Mr. Blaine was a very great man.

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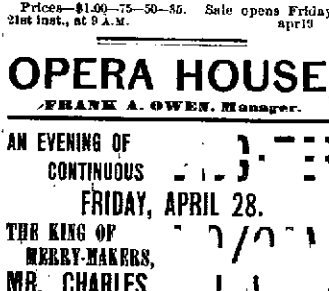
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